

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION

**Meeting minutes-March 12, 2003
Government Center, Conference Room B
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Members present:

Allen County-Ron James
Carroll County- Teresa Maxwell
Cass County-Janet Fawley
DNR-Steve Morris
Huntington County-Mike Mettler
Miami County-Ken Einselen
Parke County-John Isaacs
Posey County-Tom Straw
Sullivan County-John Gettinger
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)
Neiburger
Vermillion County-Mike Craig
Vigo County-Keith Ruble
Wabash County-Ernie Passwater

Proxies:

Adams County-Norman Neiburger
Wells County-Mike Mettler

Voting members not represented:

Fountain County
Gibson County
Jay County
Knox County
Warren County

Non-voting members present:

John Leckie-Dept of Transportation

Non-voting members not present:

DOC-Tourism
IDEM
DNR Historic Preservation/Archeology

Commission and DNR staff present:

Susan Benner-WRHCC Exec. Director
Cynthia Webb-DNR
Dale Brier-DNR

Others present:

Rory Robinson-National Park Service
Lance Schwarzkopf-Wabash Watershed
Alliance
Gary Steinbrunner-Wabash Watershed
Alliance
Dan Goen
Sheila Klinker – Indiana House of
Representatives

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Norman (Lucky) Neiburger called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. All attendees present introduced themselves.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 8, 2003 MEETING MINUTES

Minutes were approved as written.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lucky Neiburger reported that several members went to the legislature at 9 am before the meeting to lobby for the commission. Earlier in the day there were also committee meetings for education and the corridor management plan. Lucky thanked everybody for helping.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Susan Benner, Executive Director, reported submitting for the Hoosier Riverwatch grant for water quality monitoring in Sullivan and Posey Counties.

Susan applied for a Subaru Isuzu Automotive (SIA) grant for \$2000 in order to purchase a LCD projector.

Commission meeting arrangements have been made for May in New Harmony, at Thrall's Opera House and July 9th at the Honeywell Center in Wabash.

Susan has mailed out the annual newsletter and has sent out the Legislative Guidebooks to the commission members.

Susan sent the Scenic Byway resolution to Bernie Dahl and the letter of support for the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission was mailed out.

Wabash River Heritage Corridor brochures were mailed out to highway welcome centers and rest stops and one hundred brochures were dropped off to Purdue University Visitors Information Center.

The Mid America Trails & Greenways Conference exhibit request has been submitted.

Earth Day is April 19th at Sullivan Lake and Park. Susan will be attending.

COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT

Susan has made a handout for the commission to review showing commission expenditures in relation to the commission budget. This handout shows financial activity, the amount allotted for each activity, spent funds, remaining funds, estimated spending for March through June, and the total remaining funds available.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Education

Teach The Wabash will be April 11th, 9 am – 2 pm at Historic Forks of the Wabash in Huntington. Keith Huffman's Law Firm and the Wells County Foundation will be providing lunch for the workshop participants. Invitations for the workshop were sent to Jay, Adams, Allen, Wells Huntington, Wabash, Miami, Cass and Carroll County.

Legislative Initiative

Lucky thanked people that showed up and helped to lobby. Lucky indicated they had met with Senator Weatherwax and his assistant. Although supportive, they seemed non-committal regarding the commission's budget request. In speaking with Representative Klinker, Lucky said she recommended sending an information sheet to the Senate Finance Committee stating who the commission is and what the commission is trying to accomplish. Representative Klinker stressed the importance of having something in the budget before it goes to conference committee. Representative Klinker recommended asking for no more than \$125,000/year.

Legislative Initiative (continued)

Keith Ruble reported Senator Timothy Skinner spoke positively about the commission's efforts. Tom Straw also reported having met with Senator Lutz and John Gettinger reported having met with Senator John Waterman. Tom Straw recommended following up with a thank you letter that reminds of the requested legislation. Mike Mettler reported the Wells County Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to legislators. Mike Mettler suggested exploring other sources of funding such as license plates.

Water Trail

Susan suggested purchasing the following publications: *North American Water Trails: A Guide to Establishing and Maintaining Recreational Waterways on Fresh and Salt Water* and *Publishing Trail Guidance: Maps, and Guides, Guidebooks and Signs*.

Susan is working with the Banks of the Wabash to apply for grants @ \$10,000 each (SIA, Eli Lilly Tippecanoe Labs, and CINergy) to purchase interpretive signage at the public access points along the river. Initially, with the grant proposals, interpretive signs will be placed from Vigo to Tippecanoe Counties.

Historic Interpretation-Community Signs

Rory Robinson passed out a paper to the commission with new designs for the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission signs. Rory pointed out that the word "commission" was replaced with the word "community". He also pointed out the sign being circular instead of rectangular may result in higher reproduction costs. He also stated that if you use less color in the sign, it is cheaper to reproduce.

John Leckie of INDOT gave the commission quotes for the reproduction of the signs from PEN Products. For a 36-inch sign, the set-up fee would be \$1581.75, and \$74.76 for every sign after that. For a 24-inch sign, the set-up would be \$839.00, and \$58.20 for every sign after that. John said he did not get a favorable opinion from the local district towards putting up a separate mounting for the signs in Wabash River Heritage Communities.

Rory Robinson brought up a few thoughts about the signs. Suggestions included charging a set up fee to the communities and to have local communities to pay for the signs. Rory also suggested that the commission ask whoever produces the signs whether we can get the signs as needed or do we have to order a set quantity. Rory also suggested the commission determine first if there is even a desire from the communities to put these signs up? Janet Fawley suggested each commissioner find out by the next meeting if there is a demand for the signs in their counties.

Tom Straw commented the commission needed this to raise their profile and that the commission might even find private money for creating the signs.

Keith Ruble suggested it would be good to put the name of the city on the signs. Another suggestion was made to put the city and respective river mile marker on the signs.

OLD BUSINESS

Corridor Management Plan

Rory Robinson said he should have a rough draft of the management plan and resource guide ready by May. At the July meeting it will be ready for group review and revision, followed by another round of public meetings for review. The corridor management plan should be completed by the end of the year and will be posted on the web site immediately after it is completed.

Susan announced the Banks of the Wabash (BOW) will be having their Annual Meeting on April 16th at the Shadeland Community Center. The BOW has requested a presentation as to the progress of the Corridor Management Plan.

Office Lease Agreement

Susan informed the commission that the owners of the building and Lucky signed the lease agreement for the office. Attached to the lease agreement was a letter from the Attorney General with our liability information.

Scenic Byway

No report

Meeting Protocol

No report

BREAK

Tom Straw showed the commission a video entitled *Harmony on the Wabash*.

NEW BUSINESS

After watching the video there was discussion about copying it. Teresa Maxwell questioned the commission about copyright infringements. Ron James made a motion to approve \$50.00 to reproduce 32 copies of the videos and send them to the legislators. Keith Ruble seconded the motion. Motion passed. Janet Fawley suggested the videos be sent to teachers and libraries. Janet feels the legislators won't look at them.

Letters sent/Letters received

Susan sent a thank you letter to CINergy for letting us use their facilities and providing the commission with lunch at their March meeting.

Susan sent thank you letters to each Senator Weatherwax and Senator Waterman for meeting with the commission.

Susan sent a thank you letter to Representative Klinker for meeting with the commission.

Susan sent a letter of support to Upper Wabash River Basin Commission in support of their grant application to IDEM.

Letters Sent (continued)

Susan sent a letter to Susan McCloud, NRCS and Mary Ellen Gray, IDEM, with regards to Matt Jarvis and the assistance he has provided the commission.

And a thank you letter was sent to Jerry Hay for providing the commission with a free copy of his book, *Wabash River Guide Book*.

Letters received

Susan received a letter from American Rivers River Budget for the Fiscal Year 2004.

She received a letter from the Indiana Lake Management Society announcing the Annual Indiana Lakes Management Conference on April 4th & 5th, 2003 in Indianapolis.

Susan received the Tippecanoe County SWCD Conservation Newsletter.

She received the Historic Forks of the Wabash Newsletter and the Little River Wetland Newsletter.

Susan received a letter about the National River Rally being held May 9th-13th, 2003 at Stevenson, Washington.

Susan also received a letter from Project Archeology Teacher Workshop, which will be held at Angel Mounds State Historic Site.

Susan received a letter from Matt Jarvis indicating he will no longer be able to serve as an alternate member to the commission due to a new job assignment and duty station.

Susan also received a letter adding Wes Parmeter as an alternate for Cass County.

Riverkeeper Proposal

Susan gave every member of the commission a copy of the draft version of the Wabash Riverkeeper Proposal to review.

Other new business items

Steve Morris pointed out that a nominating committee for the election of officers should have been appointed in January. It was suggested the current officers could serve until May if rules are suspended. At the May meeting the committee would nominate commission members for officers roles and elections would be held. John Isaacs made a motion to suspend the rules and Ken Einselen seconded the motion. Motion passed. Steve Morris, Marianna Weinzapfel, and Janet Fawley will serve on the election committee.

Susan Benner provided a handout to the commission listing claims needing approval. The list also included ideas for future spending such as the reprinting of the Wabash poster and brochure. Mike Mettler made a motion to approve the list of expenditures introduced by Susan. Ron James seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Other new business items (continued)

Susan asked for comments or proposals to change the informative brochure about the commission. Ron James made a motion that out of the funds, Susan should reprint a quantity of 500 Wabash Brochures, and \$2000.00 should be used towards the reprint of the Wabash posters (two one-sided posters). Ron then amended his motion to making the budget of the posters \$2000.00 to edit and reprint them. Tom Straw seconded the amended motion. Motion passed.

John Gettinger said the commission is moving forward educating people on the watershed program.

Keith Ruble said we should not give up on incorporating the farmer in the mission statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Everyone was reminded of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Meeting in May.

Bernie Dahl reminded everyone of the BOW'S Annual Meeting in Shadeland, Indiana.

Ron James mentioned Little River Wetlands Project's acquisition of Arrowhead Marsh in Allen County.

GENERAL DISCUSSION**Comments by Visitors**

Lance Schwarzkopf introduced his organization, the Wabash Watershed Alliance. He mentioned the breaking down of barriers, and he would like to work with the Commission. Gary Steinbrunner also introduced himself; he is the chairman of the Wabash Watershed Alliance.

Representative Sheila Klinker expressed support for the commission and its legislative efforts. She emphasized the importance of having the commission included in the senate's budget and vowed to fight for the commission in conference committee.

NEXT MEETING-May 14, 2003, in Posey County at Thrall's Opera House in New Harmony at 1 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED